



Media Advisory

#04-001

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California Department of Transportation
District 2, Redding
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Director

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<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caltrans Prepares for Severe Weather Conditions

Redding - The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 2 in Redding is preparing for more extreme winter weather conditions in the next few days. Currently, all State facilities are open to normal traffic, however snow is predicted at higher elevations beginning this evening. At this time there are no chains restrictions but it is recommended that travelers carry chains and watch for changing weather and snow removal equipment.

The Transportation Management Center within the District 2 office will be staffed throughout the night and all snow removal personnel are prepared for the anticipated weather conditions. Travelers are encouraged to visit the District 2 web site www.dot.ca.gov/dist2, then click on Traveler Information or call the road conditions phone at 1-800-427-7623. For Oregon information refer to www.tripcheck.com or phone 511 from within Oregon, or 503-588-2941 from outside the State.

Personnel costs for the New Year's week storm were very high. For the time period of Sunday, December 28, 2003, to Saturday, January 3, 2004, the following personnel expenses were incurred by Caltrans due to the extreme weather and damage.

	<u>Overtime</u>	<u>Regular Time</u>	<u>Part-time Employees</u>
Shasta County;	\$100,000	\$130,000	\$17,000
Trinity County:	\$35,000	\$38,000	\$15,000
Siskiyou County:	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$20,000

"The biggest problems are the number of damaged trees and the depth of the snow," said Deputy District Director, Russ Wenham. "We have our tree crews working sun-up to sun-down clearing trees from the roadway, but it will take months to get all the damage cleared."

In addition to the damage issues, clearing snow is a very time-consuming project. "The snow plows are not effective at pushing the snow off the highway when more than a foot of snow falls," added Wenham. To clear the deep snow, the use of snow blowers is necessary. The snow blowers grind up the snow and ice and

blows it several feet off the highway. Since snow blowers work at a speed of 1 mph and need a lot of maintenance to keep them running, the process to clear the deep snow is very slow."

Weather in northern California is very unpredictable and changes rapidly. If there is a prediction of severe winter weather conditions, we suggest motorists stay off the roadways. If travel is necessary, make sure your vehicle is in sound condition. Start your trip with a full tank of gas and make sure your cell phone battery is fully charged. Inform others of your trip plans and when you are expected to arrive at your destination. Take a winter storm kit along with you which should include such items as tire chains, booster cables, flashlight, extra batteries, shovel, a bag of sand or cat litter, blankets and extra clothing, food, water, a first aid kit, matches or anything else that would help you survive in case you become stranded.

For more information please page the Public Information Office at 530-255-3485.

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